Speakers' Patriotic League

CENTRAL ONTARIO BRANCH

Report of the
Executive Committee
covering operations
from the date of organization
to May 31st, 1916.

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DR. A. H. ABBOTT,
Honorary Secretary

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
JUNE, 1916

The Speakers' Patriotic League was organized in March, 1915, and commenced active operations in the following month. In the memorandum then issued, the purposes of the League were set forth substantially as follows:—

To educate public opinion throughout the country as to the pressing needs of the Empire for men and money; to co-ordinate and stimulate all the various activities working to this end, and to augment the various patriotic funds without however establishing any fund of its own. Campaigns were to be carried on as the needs of the military and relief situations dictated, it being understood that whenever the recruiting of men for Overseas service, or the raising of funds for patriotic and relief purposes, appeared to be lagging in any particular district, those enrolled in the Speakers' Patriotic League should be available for promoting the organization of local committees to carry on this work, and to provide speakers to address meetings for the purpose of arousing the general public of such districts, and for securing an adequate response.

The formation of the League was due to two somewhat concurrent movements. Mr. N. F. Davidson, K.C., found, early in 1915, as he spoke in various municipalities of our Military Division, the need of some organization which could supply speakers and organizers to aid both in the stimulation of patriotic endeavor and in the organization of it for definite needs. Recruiting was being done in such a desultory way that it had practically no effect upon the community as a whole, and the needs of the Patriotic Fund were being completely overlooked in a great many places. While the Red Cross Society had organizations of women at work, there was no attempt being made to collect money for the Red Cross at all commensurate with its claims. Early in the year, Mr. Davidson called the attention of the Lieutenant-Governor to these facts and, locally, the organization of this League might be said to be due to Mr. Davidson's efforts.

At the same time, Sir Herbert Ames was working in a more statistical way in Ottawa. He found that those counties which had given fewest men were also weak so far as contributions to the Patriotic Fund were concerned. He evolved the idea of having organizations formed in each Military Division, with a central organization at Ottawa, which would aid recruiting and the Patriotic Fund.

His Honour, the Lieutenant-Governor, called a meeting of a number of gentlemen who had manifested their interest in patriotic work. This meeting was held in Government House on March 2nd, 1915, and the work of the League, as defined above, was agreed upon.

Following this, the organization work was continued at meetings held on March 12th and March 19th, and a public meeting was called

on March 25th which endorsed the whole scheme. At this meeting the officers whose names stand at the head of this report were elected.

The purposes above outlined—namely, that the League for Central Ontario, related in exactly the same way to recruiting, the Patriotic Fund and the Red Cross Fund, should serve as the central bureau for supplying speakers and organizers—have been consistently followed throughout the year. Every attempt has been made both to organize those districts which stood in need of organization and to assist bodies of citizens in every patriotic endeavor. No assistance that we could render has been refused where it was physically possible to supply it, even in those cases in which it was evident that even the travelling expenses of speakers would have to be borne by the League. That is, the broadest possible attitude has been maintained to patriotic work of every description, and the letters appended to this report, from Lieutenant-Colonel Williams, Sir Herbert Ames and Mrs. Plumptre, show that our work has been uniformly successful in regard to recruiting and the Patriotic and Red Cross Funds.

Before the work of the League is reported in detail, it might be of service to record that similar Leagues were formed for Eastern Ontario, with headquarters at Kingston, and in Montreal. Some months ago the Montreal League disbanded and was merged with the Citizens' Recruiting Committee. In Eastern Ontario, while branches of the League were formed in many places throughout Military Division No. 3 and considerable help was given to recruiting, no attempt was made to organize for either the Patriotic Fund or Red Cross Society, and in recruiting the policy of organization followed in Central Ontario has not been adopted. So far as we are aware, no other branches of the League were formed, and it was found impossible to organize the central league proposed at Ottawa. The consequence is that the Central Ontario League is the only branch which has developed as was originally proposed. The recognition of these facts may assist those who have not been familiar with the inner working of the League to realize the completely unique character of the work which has been done in Central Ontario. The fact that both in the number of men enlisted and in the contributions to the Patriotic and Red Cross Funds, Central Ontario holds an outstanding position, is in no small degree due to the kind of work which this League has done.

Military Division No. 2, to which we have largely confined our attention, is composed of thirteen counties and four districts. The Eastern boundary of the Division is the Eastern limit of Ontario County, the District of Muskoka, the District of Parry Sound, and the District of Nipissing; the Western boundary is the Western limit of the Counties of Norfolk, Brant, Wentworth, Halton, Peel, Dufferin and Grey, and the District of Algoma. No part of this rather large area has been overlooked, and while we have found it possible to do more work in some parts of the Division than in others, owing to both geographical and local conditions, a complete report of

the work accomplished would deal with every County and District mentioned. Further, our activities have by no means been confined to our own Division. We have done work as far East as Peterborough in No. 3 Division and in many places in Military Division No. 1.

At the inception of our work, Mr. (now Captain) C. N. Cochrane, B.A., was engaged as organizing secretary. His work consisted largely in the formation of local committees in those towns and counties where no steps had been taken in the direction of organizing for patriotic work. He remained with the League until the middle of November, when he became Secretary of the Soldiers' Aid Commission. A great deal of the success of the League is due to the splendid work of Mr. Cochrane, in placing local patriotic organizations in our Division on a thoroughly sound and practical foundation.

When it was found that Mr. W. C. Rean, the organizer for the Canadian Patriotic Fund, could not keep pace with the work of organizing the local campaigns for the raising of money which we had ready for him, the League secured, about the middle of June, the services of Mr. (now Lieutenant) B. J. Roberts, who has rendered conspicuous service in the organization of rural municipalities, and who is still with us, as probably the most expert organizer of recruiting campaigns in the Division.

Even with the addition of Mr. Roberts, the work of organization could not keep pace with the demand, and, as the patriotic committees in many places were willing to combine the Patriotic and Red Cross Funds in their campaigns, the whole matter was presented to the Canadian Red Cross Society, with the result that Mr. A. M. Miller, B.A., was, about the 1st of July, engaged by them as organizer and placed at the disposal of the Speakers' Patriotic League. Mr. Miller's work has continued without interruption to the present time, and we have already planned a full Summer's work for him.

In the early Fall, Mr. Melville H. Staples, B.A., was engaged on the same basis as Mr. Miller by the Red Cross Society, and placed at our disposal. Mr. Staples did splendid work until May 1st, when it was felt that he might be released for other work which demanded his attention.

In the early Fall, also, we were able to secure Mr. J. M. Wyatt, B.A., for the Patriotic Fund, with which he has been working since that time. A full Summer's work in Eastern Ontario is already arranged by the Patriotic Fund Executive Committee for him.

The above will at once make evident how close has been the relation between the work of this League and the National Patriotic Fund and the Canadian Red Cross Society.

From the organization of our League we have been in close touch with the recruiting situation, although during the first few months of

our existence it was not possible to render material assistance to recruiting, owing to the special conditions under which the work was then being carried on. However, the first civilian recruiting committee in the Division was formed in Collingwood and a recruiting campaign undertaken about the middle of June. This campaign inaugurated the methods which have since been followed with such splendid success throughout the Division; namely, the preparation of a list of the names of eligible men and the personal canvassing of them. While the campaign was productive of good results in men enlisted, probably the most valuable result was the information which it gave us as to the exact state of mind which existed in the country. The information secured was at once utilized and the first public result of this was the Massey Hall meeting, held under the auspices of General Logie and the commanding officers of the local battalions. The Acting Secretary of the League, Mr. Cochrane, was the Secretary of the Committee which organized this meeting, and the expenses of the meeting were borne by this League. It is unnecessary to speak of the tremendous and unexpected success which attended the meeting. Not only was Massey Hall filled, but it was reported that at least 10,000 people gathered in front of the City Hall in the overflow meeting. At this meeting the first step was taken in the formation of the Citizens' Recruiting League of Toronto, for which Mr. Cochrane acted as Secretary until the organization was completed.

With the Massey Hall meeting, began the active recruiting work throughout the Division, which has continued with such conspicuous success until the present time. The authorization of the formation of county battalions in the Fall led to general activity throughout the whole Division. We were, consequently, called upon to supply speakers for recruiting meetings, and this led to the engagement of returned soldiers, who were trained to address these meetings.

The appointment of Major (now Lieutenant-Colonel) Williams as Chief Recruiting Officer for the Division was a great step in advance. He at once made use of the local committees which we had formed and to these added others in many places. The really significant element in this was the definite recognition by the military authorities of the part which civilian organizations should take in recruiting.

However, the detailed organization of the Divison was not undertaken until the formation, on November 23rd, of the Central Recruiting Committee. Mr. John M. Godfrey, who had been prominent in the organization of the County of Peel, took the leading part in the organization of this Recruiting Committee. On its formation, the Recruiting Committee requested the Speakers' Patriotic League to administer the funds which might be placed at its disposal to aid recruiting, and to undertake all the office and organization work which might be required. The consequence has been that from the 1st of December last the activities of the Speakers' Patriotic League have been very largely devoted

to recruiting. All the office expenses in connection with the work of the Central Recruiting Committee have been borne by the Speakers' Patriotic League; consequently, all the money provided through voluntary and county contributions by the Recruiting Committee has been used for recruiting purposes only. (The amount disbursed to date is $10,400.) Colonel Williams' letter is as clear and definite a statement as is needed with regard to the place which the Speakers' Patriotic League has taken in the recruiting activities of this Division.

The thanks of the League are due to the many ladies and gentlemen who have given their services as speakers, at the League's request, without remuneration, and have done such excellent service. Many of the speakers whom we have sent out have placed themselves unreservedly at our disposal. This has been of the greatest possible assistance in the arrangement of meetings.

In addition to the speakers, due acknowledgment should be made to the friends of the League who have contributed so generously toward its support. All the money received came from voluntary contributions, and the work of the League was, naturally, in the last analysis, dependent upon those through whose generosity it was supported.

Mention should also be made of our indebtedness to the authorities of the University of Toronto, who have contributed very largely to the work of the League, both in providing office accommodation without cost and in giving the services of Dr. Abbott, the Honorary Secretary.

The following letters, dealing with the work of the League, have been received by the Secretary:

From Lieutenant-Colonel George H. Williams,
Chief Recruiting Officer, Military District No. 2.

"It affords me very great pleasure to bear testimony to the invaluable services you have personally and also officially, through the Speakers' Patriotic League, rendered us in our recruiting campaign in this district. The unusual success attained here has been in a very large degree the result of your splendid organization and efficient staff. Your experience in securing the splendid results to the Patriotic Fund enabled you to come instantly into touch with the most active persons and societies in this area, so that we were able to secure an organization most efficient and adequate for our recruiting campaign. Your assistants, Captain Cochrane and Lieutenant Roberts, chosen by you, have justified the wisdom of your selection by the hearty co-operation afforded the work. You have been successful in securing financial resources by which a number of capable and successful returned soldiers have been at our disposal continually for recruiting, and in addition a most effective and competent body of volunteer speakers have been available without interruption throughout the entire campaign. Your League has been the only source of poster supply, the selection of which has met with general approval and occasioned universal demand. It is impossible to put too high an estimate on the value of the many forms of splendid service rendered by your office and League, and it is to be hoped that in the work yet to be done to secure the quota of recruits in this district we may be assured of your continued assistance in supply of speakers, stock of posters, etc. The future of our recruiting presents peculiar difficulties in the demand for persistent and

experienced modes of appeal. There is no existing organization competent to do the work of your Speakers' Patriotic League, and in thanking you for the most estimable assistance afforded in the past year I would express the hope that you may be able to continue the same until our recruiting is complete."

CANADIAN PATRIOTIC FUND.

From Sir Herbert B. Ames, K.T., M.P. Ottawa, May 13th, 1916.
Honorary Secretary.

"As I understand that in the near future the annual meeting of the Speakers' Patriotic League for Central Ontario will be called, it may not be out of order to give some expression to our appreciation of the services your League has rendered.

"With the ever increasing enlistment, the demands on the Canadian Patriotic Fund steadily grow from month to month. We are to-day paying out twice as much as we did a year ago and 25 per cent. more than we did four months ago. We expect that the sum needed for the month of May will not be far from $700,000. Now, we rely entirely upon voluntary subscriptions that may be sent in to us by governing bodies or by private individuals. The spirit of generosity is widespread among our Canadian people, but if it be not appealed to and organized it may not find full expression. Thanks to the splendid service which your Speakers' Patriotic League has rendered, many communities have given most generously to the Patriotic Fund, and, on behalf of the National Executive, I want to express to your League our highest appreciation and our heartiest thanks. During the past year it has been only necessary for us to indicate that any given community, within the area under your supervision, did not appear to be seized with a sense of their *full* responsibility as to their duty towards our Fund, to have your League stimulate such communities with most gratifying results.

"I trust that your Board may appreciate the splendid personal service which you are rendering and may give you and your associates, for the coming year, such efficient support as may enable a continuance of your excellent work."

THE CANADIAN RED CROSS SOCIETY.

From Mrs. H. P. Plumptre, Toronto, May 22nd, 1916.
Corresponding Secretary.

"As I believe your annual meeting of the Speakers' Patriotic League is to be held shortly, I am writing in the name of the Executive to thank your speakers and yourself personally for the very valuable assistance rendered to the cause of the Canadian Red Cross Society through your organization.

"We feel that the cause of the Red Cross has profited greatly by the addresses given by your speakers, by which the general scope of its operations has been made known in places which would not otherwise have been reached.

"Thanking you for your personal readiness to assist our work at all times."

Since its inception, the League has supplied speakers for and aided in the organization of 980 public meetings, including those held for general patriotic purposes, on behalf of the Canadian Patriotic and Red Cross Funds and for recruiting. A total approximately of $1,500,000 was raised for the two above-mentioned funds as a result of the League's endeavor, assisted by local committees.

The following is a summary of the recruiting work done by the Speakers' Patriotic League in conjunction with the Central Recruiting Committee:

Speakers supplied for	777 meetings.
Posters supplied	69,800
Pamphlets supplied	180,000

FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

(From date of organization to May 31, 1916.)

RECEIPTS:			
Contributions			$6,478.57
EXPENDITURE:			
Office Expenditure (telephone, telegraph, stationery, furniture, etc.)		$ 826.14	
Sundries (postage, express, etc.)		226.90	
Salaries—			
Office Staff	$1,480.50		
Organizers	1,460.00		
Dr. Abbott's substitute	420.00	3,360.50	
Printing Posters	480.66		
Less Receipts	30.00	450.66	
Massey Hall Meeting		177.75	
Automobile (for organizers)		325.00	
Travelling Expenses (organizers)		1,111.13	
Speakers' Expenses	$678.65		
Less Refund	543.95	134.70	
Deficit (May 31)			134.21
		$6,612.78	$6,612.78

This report would be incomplete without reference to the services which have been rendered to the League voluntarily by the Honorary Secretary, Dr. A. H. Abbott, ever since its inception. Throughout the period of its activities he has given to the work the most unremitting and whole-hearted service and it is not saying too much to state that without his assistance the successful results which the League has attained could not have been achieved.

JOHN S. HENDRIE,
President.

C. A. MASTEN,
Chairman of Executive Committee.

Toronto, Ont., June 20, 1916.